

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 DAMASC 01750 231121Z

42

ACTION SS-30

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /031 W

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P R 231056Z AUG 74

FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1297

INFO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

AMEMBASSY LONDON

C O N F I D E N T I A L DAMASCUS 1750

EXDIS

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: EAIR

SUBJECT: SYRIAN ARAB AIRLINES EQUIPMENT PURCHASE

REF: DAMASCUS 1730

1. LAST NIGHT (AUGUST 22) AT A RECEPTION FOR FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY BAND MINISTER OF ECONOMY IMADI TOLD ME THAT THE SYRIAN GOVERNMENT HAS DECIDED TO BUY THE AIRBUS RATHER THAN THE LOCKHEED TRISTAR. I ASKED HIM IF HE WAS CERTAIN OF THIS AND HE SAID THAT BASED ON HIS LATEST INFORMATION, HE WAS. HE ADDED AS THOUGH IN AN AFTER THOUGHT THAT THE AMERICAN COMPANIES HAD FAILED IN THEIR EFFORTS TO WIN THE CONTRACT BECAUSE "THEY GOT HERE TOO LATE." WHEN I ASKED HIM WHAT HE MEANT BY THIS NOTING THAT BOTH LOCKHEED AND MCDONNELL DOUGLAS HAD BEEN WORKING FOR THIS CONTRACT FOR AT LEAST THE LAST SIX MONTHS, HE SIMPLY SHRUGGED HIS SHOULDERS AND SAID THAT AIRBUS COMPANY HAD BEEN ACTIVE FOR A MUCH LONGER PERIOD OF TIME.

2. COMMENT: I HAVE NO WAY OF KNOWING HOW PRIVY MINISTER IMADI IS TO THE INNER-MOST WORKINGS OF THE REGIME BUT SUSPECT ON A MATTER LIKE THIS HE IS REASONABLY AU COURANT, AT LEAST AS FAR AS THE FINAL DECISION IS CONCERNED.
SCOTES

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NOTE BY OC/T: EXDIS CAPTION ADDED PER MS. MATTESON, S/S-O, 8/23/74

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NNN

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